



Teacher Tips: Teaching Students With Learning Disabilities

Note: The following suggestions may be helpful in working with students who have learning disabilities, and also those who have head injuries.

- Students with learning disabilities may take longer to complete exams and may need extended time.
- Students with learning disabilities may also take longer to complete assignments, so it is particularly important to provide a detailed syllabus at the beginning of the class. The syllabus should list all assignments and due-dates.
- Provide frequent opportunities for feedback, such as weekly quizzes on assigned reading, instructor review of early drafts or essays, error-analysis of tests.
- Encourage students to contact you in order to clarify assignments. The discussion will give you a better idea of how you can help the student produce better work.
- Prior to classes starting, provide a list of required and recommended texts at your department office, or with the appropriate counselor. Some students with disabilities may need to order their texts from Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic, and receiving the books takes time.
- Some students may be unable to answer questions when called upon as a result of their disability. If you are aware of any difficulties, talk with the student and discuss other ways they can meaningfully participate in class, such as volunteering comments or making short presentations.
- Compose exams in a way that makes them accessible for students with learning disabilities. Make sure that exams are clearly written or typed, in large black letters or numbers, with spaces between lines and with double or triple spaces between items. Also, avoid cramming too many questions on one page, and print questions on only one side of the paper.
- Group similar types of questions together; for example, all true/false, all multiple-choice, all short-answers. Leave several spaces between multiple-choice items.
- Permit students to circle answers in the test booklet rather than darkening circles on a Scantron sheet.
- Allow students to use paper in preparing answers to essay questions before writing them on the test sheet.
- Suggest that math students use graph paper or lined paper turned sideways to ensure neatness and avoid confusion when performing math calculations.

Source: *Tools for Teaching*, Office of the State Director for Career and Technical Education, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1998.